

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

UNCLAS ZAGREB 000298

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

DEPT FOR NEA

NEA PASS TO NEA COLLECTIVES AND NPT COLLECTIVES

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [XF](#) [IR](#) [HR](#)

SUBJECT: IRANIAN PRESIDENT TO MAKE LONG-EXPECTED VISIT

REF: A. ZAGREB 273

[1](#)B. ZAGREB 262

[1](#)1. (SBU) SUMMARY AND COMMENT: Iranian President Mohammad Khatami is expected to visit Croatia on March 17 as part of a multi-nation tour. He is returning a visit President Stjepan Mesic made to Tehran in 2001 before he leaves office. Mesic,s office and GoC contacts have told Post that the timing of the visit, which will include a meeting with PM Ivo Sanader, is completely unrelated to current discussions regarding Iran,s nuclear program and have assured us that Croatia supports the EU-Iran negotiations, unobstructed IAEA inspections, and calls for Iran to end its support for terrorism. Contacts within the GoC, which to date has been unable to coordinate foreign policy with the President,s office, are visibly nervous about the visit, afraid of offending western powers.

[1](#)2. (SBU) Mesic has asked Ambassador Frank for points he can raise with Khatami to address international concerns regarding Iran. New presidential foreign policy advisor Budimir Loncar told the Ambassador this was Mesic,s way of showing his commitment to improving US-Croatia relations. Post will advise Mesic to encourage Iran to completely cooperate with IAEA inspectors, make its current suspension of enrichment and reprocessing agreed with the EU-3 permanent, and end its support of terrorism and its violent opposition to the Middle East peace process. We will share the same points with the PM,s office. END SUMMARY AND COMMENT.

MESIC AND IRAN: A SYMBOL OF TITO,S NON-ALIGNED LEGACY

[1](#)3. (SBU) Mesic sees Croatia as the heir to Tito,s founding role in the non-aligned movement, as demonstrated in remarks from his recent inauguration speech (reftels). Carrying on this tradition as a way of increasing Croatia,s international stature appears to have been his motivation in fostering relations with nations such as Iran, Libya, and Syria during his first five-year term. Initiatives, however, have been primarily cultural or economic. We know of no new initiatives planned for the Khatami visit and expect meetings to focus on possibilities for economic cooperation.

[1](#)4. (U) Croatia,s relations with Iran date back to 1992, when the new republic was happy to meet with any country that would recognize it. Bilateral agreements and MOUs range from abolishing visa requirements for holders of official and diplomatic passports to cooperation in economics, transportation, culture, medicine and technology. Activities under these agreements are relatively insignificant.

FRANK

NNNN